



International Exchange Project of Gardeners
between Botanical Gardens

Gardeners Exchange Unique, Says Helmut Schmidt. On October 23rd, the Hamburg Botanical Garden was re-named “Loki Schmidt Garden” in honour of the late Loki Schmidt. Speakers at the ceremony included Hamburg’s Lord Mayor Olaf Scholz, Prof. Dr. Dieter Lenzen, president of the Hamburg University, and Helmut Schmidt. Germany’s former chancellor had been married to Germany’s foremost plantswoman Loki Schmidt for nearly 70 years. The audience was deeply moved when he recollected Loki’s lifetime achievements which included the International Gardeners Exchange. Helmut Schmidt holds the Gardeners Exchange to be unique because it focusses not on scientists, but on gardeners, which are craftsmen of prime importance to botanical gardens.

Dresden and Talca (Chile) Partnership Continues, Thanks to ZEIT-Stiftung. It all started in 2000 when the distinguished Hamburg-based foundation awarded a travel grant to superintendent Matthias Bartusch of the Dresden botanical garden. Additional exchange projects funded by the ZEIT-Stiftung in 2008 and 2009 helped to expand the partnership. In 2013, Birgit Höde, in charge of the Annuals collection at Dresden, is scheduled to work at Talca for four weeks. By sponsoring the Dresden-Talca-connection, the ZEIT foundation continues its commitment to botany and to the Gardeners Exchange created by Loki Schmidt.



Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Foto: D. Fietsch

Honours at Anniversary: Brunhild Köhl First Sponsor to Adopt a Plant in Hamburg’s Botanical Garden. It is certainly a special plant species to adopt! The cycad *Encephalartos altensteinii* is the oldest and most famous plant in the greenhouses of the Old Botanical Garden and had arrived here some 180 years ago from the Cape Region of South Africa. It was described as a new species by J.C.G. Lehmann, first director of the Hamburg garden, and may be



considered as a living type specimen. Being both, head of the garden today, and a successor to Lehmann, Dr. Carsten Schirarend presented the certificate to Brunhild Köhl on the tenth anniversary of the Gardeners Exchange Foundation which she had made possible by her donation in 2002.

Encephalartos altensteinii – living type specimen.
Foto: G. Bertram

Our Philosophy. Loki Schmidt was a teacher by training and a botanist by passion. Two ideas were dear to her heart. To conserve the world’s flora in all its diversity and beauty for further generations. And to advance the education of young people, stressing the intellectual and emotional qualities of hands-on experience. Both lines of thought have formed the basic philosophy of the International Gardeners Exchange since it was founded by Loki Schmidt in 1987.

The basic function of Botanical Gardens all over the world is to ensure that threatened species are securely cultivated. To fulfill this task, a highly skilled horticultural staff is essential. To widen their experience, however, gardeners cannot rely on books and formal instructions; they have to observe the plants in their natural habitats abroad, and they need to exchange their expertise with like-minded colleagues from botanical gardens in other regions. But to travel abroad is expensive. Gardeners do not earn much money, and they lack the funding opportunities which are available to students and to scientists. This is where our foundation gets in. We award grants to gardeners from



botanical gardens for international travel and for exchange projects. By doing so, we support the networking between botanical gardens in conserving threatened species, and we sponsor talented young adults.

We need your support to provide support!

We are a small but very active foundation. Working on a reasonably adequate budget, we are able to sponsor two to three larger and several smaller projects each year. Please have a look at our homepage for information on these projects, and let yourself be inspired by the verve of our traveling gardeners. If you wish to support us, there are many possibilities. We will be pleased if you contact us.

Report of the activities in 2012

Edinburgh: The knack for *Victoria regia*. Dirk Fietsch from Dresden worked at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh for two weeks in August. "The Chilean section managed by Clare Morter was highly interesting for me because, due to our long-standing partnership with the botanical garden of Talca, at Dresden we also have specialized in the flora of Chile." He also was shown the knack of how to make *Victoria regia* produce extra-large leaves: You have to remove the first buds! The garden Edinburgh is state-owned and has a higher standing than many university gardens, but this does not impair the social relations. "Friday is a short working day at the garden. They finish at 2:30 p.m., and the staff goes to the local pub, often with their working dress on. Scientists and gardeners alike will join for 1, 2, 3... pints." Dirk Fietsch wished he could have stayed for longer. Patrik Clifford from Edinburgh will repay the visit in May 2013. He specially asked for the busy season.



Caucasus. Rich harvest. We have reported on the Caucasus expedition of 2011 in our last issue. Altogether, 14 plantsmen and plantswoman from 5 different countries had taken part.

Paeonia in Sweden. Foto: M. Marzke

A large group met in Gothenburg in 2012 to exchange experiences in the cultivation of the plants and seeds which they had collected – and to make plans for new activities.

Inspiring Lecture on International Gardeners Exchange.

In January 2012, the lecture hall of the botanical institute at Hamburg was crowded when four gardeners gave highly inspiring talks on their various travels which had been sponsored by our foundation. For some it had been the first time to appear in front of such a large audience, but all of them glowed with enthusiasm, and the presentations were very well received. Thank you all!

Projects in 2013.

Altogether, about 10.000 Euro will be awarded. The ZEIT-Stiftung will sponsor the partnership between Dresden and Talca (see above). A gardener from Potsdam botanical garden will travel to Medellin (Colombia) to start a new partnership there. Two gardeners from the Hamburg botanical garden have been invited by the botanical garden of Bukarest (Romania) to work at its department for useful plants. They will be accompanied by a young gardener and will stay of the guest house of the Bukarest garden. In addition, gardeners from Hamburg will travel to the Appalachian region of the USA, chiefly in order to collect seeds for the North American section of the Hamburg botanical garden. Two young gardeners from Bonn will receive travel grants to study snow-drops in English gardens and to visit the Swiss Alps.

Special Offer to Young Gardeners. Young gardeners may apply any time for travel funds up to 500 €. Please contact us.

Applications for 2014 are open until September 15th, 2013. Please note that we now have an earlier deadline.

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Read more: gaertneraustausch.de/index_englisch.html